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EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR DEMOCRACY THROUGH LAW

# Agreements establishing the Commonwealth of Independent States

[Done at Minsk, December 8, 1991,  
and done at Alma Alta, December 21, 1991]

ARMENIA-AZERBAIJAN-BELARUS-KAZAKHSTAN-KYRGYZSTAN-MOLDOVA-  
 RUSSIAN FEDERATION-TAJIKISTAN-TURKMENISTAN-UZBEKISTAN-UKRAINE:  
 AGREEMENTS ESTABLISHING THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES\*  
 [Done at Minsk, December 8, 1991,  
 and done at Alma Alta, December 21, 1991]  
 +Cite as 31 I.L.M. 138 (1992)+

I.L.M. Background/Content Summary

On December 24, 1991, the Secretary-General of the United Nations informed the member states that he had received a letter from the Permanent Representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics transmitting a letter from the President of the Russian Federation (RSFSR). The letter stated that "the membership of the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics in the United Nations, including the Security Council and all other organs and organizations of the United Nations system, is being continued by the Russian Federation (RSFSR) with the support of the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States."

As of February 7, 1992, the United Nations Security Council had received applications for admission to the United Nations from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Applications are referred to the Committee on the Admission of New Members for examination and report. The Security Council then acts on the recommendation of the Committee and by resolution recommends to the General Assembly that the country be admitted to membership in the United Nations. U.N. membership was recommended in all cases. Belarus and the Ukraine have been U.N. members since 1945.

On September 17, 1991, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were admitted as new members to the United Nations General Assembly. The Baltic States and the ten former Soviet Republics have also become participants in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, with the Baltic States being admitted on September 10, 1991, and the others on January 30, 1992. Russia assumed the seat held by the former Soviet Union.

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\*[The Minsk Declaration and Agreement of December 8, 1991 are reproduced from U.N. Document A/46/771 of December 13, 1991. The Alma Alta Agreements are reproduced from U.N. Document A/47/60 of December 30, 1991. The Agreements were annexed to letters from the Permanent Representative of Belarus to the Secretary-General.]

TEXT OF DECLARATION BY THE HEADS OF STATE OF BELARUS, RUSSIA AND UKRAINE - I.L.M. Page 142

[Noting deadlock on the drafting of a new Soviet Treaty and the withdrawal of republics from the U.S.S.R.; noting the economic, social and political crisis in the U.S.S.R.; proclaiming the establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent States by agreement signed 8 December 1991, comprised of Belarus, Russia and Ukraine, open for accession by other members of the U.S.S.R.; expressing intent to honor existing U.S.S.R. treaties and to make provision for the joint control and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons]

[Done at Minsk on 8 December 1991]  
[Signatures]

TEXT OF AGREEMENT ESTABLISHING THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES - I.L.M. Page 143

[PREAMBLE]

- Art. 1 [ESTABLISHMENT]  
[Establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent States]
- Art. 2 [GUARANTEE OF INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS]
- Art. 3 [PROTECTION OF MINORITIES]
- Art. 4 [COOPERATION]  
[Politics, economics, culture, education, health care, environmental protection, science, trade and humanitarianism]
- Art. 5 [TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY; FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT]
- Art. 6 [SECURITY; ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT]  
[Joint command of the military and nuclear weapons; social security of soldiers]
- Art. 7 [OTHER JOINT ACTIVITY]  
[Foreign policy; customs policy; transportation and communications; environmental protection; migration policy; organized crime]
- Art. 8 [CHERNOBYL DISASTER]  
[Consequences of the disaster will be minimized]
- Art. 9 [INTERPRETATION AND APPLICATION OF THIS AGREEMENT]  
[Negotiations]
- Art. 10 [SUSPENSION OF APPLICATION]  
[One year's notice]
- Art. 11 [NON-APPLICABILITY OF U.S.S.R. LAW]
- Art. 12 [APPLICABILITY OF U.S.S.R. TREATIES]
- Art. 13 [ACCESSION]
- Art. 14 [COORDINATING ORGANS LOCATED AT MINSK]

[Done at Minsk on 8 December 1991]  
[Authentic texts: Byelorussian, Russian and Ukrainian]  
[Signatures]

TEXT OF PROTOCOL TO THE AGREEMENT ESTABLISHING THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES - I.L.M. Page 147

[Stating that the Commonwealth of Independent States shall consist of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia (RSFSR), Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Ukraine]

[Done at Alma Ata on 21 December 1991]

[Authentic texts: Azerbaijani, Armenian, Belarusian, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Moldavian, Russian, Tajik, Turkmen, Uzbek and Ukrainian]

[Depositary: Belarus archives]

[Signatures]

TEXT OF ALMA ATA DECLARATION - I.L.M. Page 148

[Declaring: Cooperation among parties of the Commonwealth of Independent States based upon the principle of equality; unified command of military forces and joint control over nuclear weapons; extinction of the U.S.S.R.]

[Done at Alma Ata on 21 December 1991]

[Signatures]

TEXT OF MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HEADS OF INDEPENDENT STATES - I.L.M. Page 149

[Assigning command of the armed forces to Marshal E.I. Shaposhnikov]

[Done at Alma Ata on 21 December 1991]

[Signatures]

TEXT OF AGREEMENT ON COORDINATING BODIES OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES - I.L.M. Page 150

[The coordinating bodies shall include a supreme organ, a Council of Heads of State and a Council of Heads of Government]

[Done at Alma Ata on 21 December 1991]

[Signatures]

TEXT OF DECISION BY THE COUNCIL OF HEADS OF STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES - I.L.M. Page 151

[Supporting: Russia's continued permanent membership on the U.N. Security Council; the U.N. membership of other states of the Commonwealth]

[Done at Alma Ata on 21 December 1991]

[Authentic texts: Azerbaijani, Armenian, Belarusian, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Moldavian, Russian, Tajik, Turkmen, Uzbek and Ukrainian]

[Depositary: Belarus archives]

[Signatures]

TEXT OF AGREEMENT ON JOINT MEASURES WITH RESPECT TO NUCLEAR WEAPONS  
- I.L.M. Page 152

[PREAMBLE]

[In the interest of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, elimination of all nuclear weapons, strengthening of international stability]

- Art. 1 [JOINT STRATEGIC ARMED FORCES]  
[Noting that nuclear weapons safeguard the collective security of the Commonwealth states]
- Art. 2 [NON-FIRST-USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS]
- Art. 3 [JOINT POLICY]  
[To be developed]
- Art. 4 [NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN BELARUS AND UKRAINE]  
[Pending elimination of nuclear weapons from Belarus and Ukraine, the President of Russia shall decide their use]
- Art. 5 [NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS]  
[Belarus and Ukraine shall accede to the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty as non-nuclear states and conclude an IAEA safeguards agreement; non-transfer of nuclear weapons, except to Russia]
- Art. 6 [ELIMINATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS]
- Art. 7 [TREATY ON REDUCTION AND ELIMINATION OF STRATEGIC OFFENSIVE ARMS]  
[To be ratified by Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia and Ukraine]
- Art. 8 [RATIFICATION; ENTRY INTO FORCE]

[Done at Alma Ata]

[Authentic texts: Belarusian, Kazakh, Russian and Ukrainian]

[Signatures]

TEXT OF STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS -  
I.L.M. Page 153

[Stating principles of the observance of human rights and of the peaceful settlement of disputes]

[Signature of Belarus President]

[Adopted at Alma Ata on 21 December 1991 as an official document of the Commonwealth]

**DECLARATION BY THE HEADS OF STATE OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS,  
THE RSFSR AND UKRAINE**

We, the leaders of the Republic of Belarus, the RSFSR and Ukraine,

Noting that the talks on the drafting of a new Soviet Treaty have become deadlocked and that the de facto process of withdrawal of republics from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the formation of independent States has become a reality,

Noting that the short-sighted policy of the centre has led to a profound economic and political crisis, to the breakdown of production and to a catastrophic drop in the living standards of practically all strata of society,

Bearing in mind the growing social tension in many regions of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which has led to conflicts between nationalities with a heavy toll of victims,

Recognizing our responsibility to our peoples and the world community and the pressing need for the practical implementation of political and economic reforms,

Proclaim the establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent States concerning which the parties have signed an agreement on 8 December 1991.

The Commonwealth of Independent States comprising the Republic of Belarus, the RSFSR and Ukraine is open for accession by all States members of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, as well as by other States sharing the purposes and principles of this agreement.

The States members of the Commonwealth intend to pursue a policy of strengthening international peace and security. They undertake to discharge the international obligations incumbent on them under treaties and agreements entered into by the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and are making provision for joint control over nuclear weapons and for their non-proliferation.

**S. SHUSHKEVICH**  
Chairman of the Supreme Soviet  
of the Republic of Belarus

**B. YELTSIN**  
President of the RSFSR

**L. KRAVCHUK**  
President of Ukraine

Minsk, 8 December 1991

## AGREEMENT ESTABLISHING THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES

We, the Republic of Belarus, the Russian Federation (RSFSR) and Ukraine, as founder States of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and signatories of the Union Treaty of 1922, hereinafter referred to as the High Contracting Parties, hereby declare that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as a subject of international law and a geopolitical reality no longer exists.

On the basis of the historical commonality of our peoples and the ties that have developed between them, and bearing in mind the bilateral agreements concluded between High Contracting Parties,

Desirous of setting up lawfully constituted democratic States,

Intending to develop our relations on the basis of mutual recognition of and respect for State sovereignty, the inalienable right to self-determination, the principles of equality and non-intervention in internal affairs, of abstention from the use of force and from economic or other means of applying pressure and of settling controversial issues through agreement, and other universally recognized principles and norms of international law,

Considering that the further development and strengthening of relations of friendship, good-neighbourliness and mutually advantageous cooperation between our States are in accord with the vital national interests of their peoples and serve the cause of peace and security,

Confirming our adherence to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the Helsinki Final Act and the other documents of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe,

Undertaking to abide by the universally recognized international norms relating to human and peoples' rights,

We have agreed as follows:

Article 1

The High Contracting Parties hereby establish the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Article 2

The High Contracting Parties guarantee to their citizens, regardless of their nationality or other differences, equal rights and freedoms. Each of the High Contracting Parties guarantees to the citizens of the other Parties, and also to stateless persons resident in their territory, regardless of national affiliation or other differences, civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights and freedoms in accordance with the universally recognized international norms relating to human rights.

Article 3

The High Contracting Parties, desirous of facilitating the expression, preservation and development of the distinctive ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious characteristics of the national minorities resident in their territories and of the unique ethno-cultural regions that have come into being, will extend protection to them.

Article 4

The High Contracting Parties will develop equitable and mutually advantageous cooperation between their peoples and States in the spheres of politics, economics, culture, education, health care, environmental protection, science and trade and in the humanitarian and other spheres, will promote the broad exchange of information and will discharge their mutual obligations conscientiously and in full.

The Parties deem it necessary to conclude an agreement on cooperation in the above-mentioned spheres.

Article 5

The High Contracting Parties acknowledge and respect each other's territorial integrity and the inviolability of existing borders within the Commonwealth.

They guarantee openness of borders, freedom of movement of citizens and freedom of transmission of information within the Commonwealth.

Article 6

The States members of the Commonwealth will cooperate in safeguarding international peace and security and implementing effective measures for the reduction of armaments and military expenditures. They are striving to eliminate all nuclear weapons and achieve universal and complete disarmament under strict international control.

The Parties will respect each other's efforts to achieve the status of a nuclear-free zone and a neutral State.

The States members of the Commonwealth will maintain, and retain under joint command, a common military and strategic space, including joint control over nuclear weapons, the procedure for implementing which will be regulated by a special agreement.

They also jointly guarantee the necessary conditions for the deployment and functioning and the material and social security of the strategic armed forces. The Parties undertake to pursue an agreed policy on issues of the social welfare and provision of pensions for military personnel and their families.

Article 7

The High Contracting Parties recognize that the sphere of their joint activity, conducted on an equitable basis through common coordinating institutions of the Commonwealth, embraces:



- coordination of foreign policy;
- cooperation in the formation and development of a common economic space and Europe-wide and Eurasian markets and in the field of customs policy;
- cooperation in developing the transport and communications systems;
- cooperation in the protection of the environment and participation in establishing a comprehensive international system of environmental security;
- issues of migration policy;
- combating organized crime.

#### Article 8

The Parties recognize the planet-wide nature of the Chernobyl disaster, and undertake to unite and coordinate their efforts to minimize and overcome its consequences.

They have agreed to conclude for these purposes a special agreement which takes into account the seriousness of the disaster's consequences.

#### Article 9

Disputes regarding the interpretation and application of the provisions of this Agreement shall be resolved by means of negotiations between the appropriate organs, and if necessary at the state and governmental level.

#### Article 10

Each of the High Contracting Parties reserves the right to suspend the application of this Agreement or individual articles thereof by giving the Parties to the Agreement one year's notice of such suspension.

The provisions of this Agreement may be supplemented or modified by mutual agreement among the High Contracting Parties.

#### Article 11

From the moment of signature of the present Agreement, application of the laws of third States, including the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, shall not be permitted in the territories of the signatory States.

#### Article 12

The High Contracting Parties undertake to discharge the international obligations incumbent on them under treaties and agreements entered into by the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

#### Article 13

This Agreement shall not affect the obligations of the High Contracting Parties towards third States.

This Agreement is open for accession by all States members of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and also by other States sharing the purposes and principles of this Agreement.

Article 14

The official location of the coordinating organs of the Commonwealth shall be the city of Minsk.

The activities of organs of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in the territories of the States members of the Commonwealth are hereby terminated.

Done at Minsk on 8 December 1991 in three copies, each in the Byelorussian, Russian and Ukrainian languages, the three texts being equally authentic.

For the Republic of Belarus

S. SHUSHKEVICH

B. KEBICH

For the RSFSR

B. YELTSIN

G. BURBULIS

For Ukraine

L. KRAVCHUK

V. FOKIN

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Protocol to the Agreement establishing the Commonwealth of  
Independent States signed at Minsk on 8 December 1991 by  
the Republic of Belarus, the Russian Federation (RSFSR)  
and Ukraine

The Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation (RSFSR), the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, the Republic of Uzbekistan and Ukraine, on an equitable basis and as High Contracting Parties, shall constitute the Commonwealth of Independent States.

The Agreement establishing the Commonwealth of Independent States shall enter into force for each of the High Contracting Parties from the moment of its ratification.

On the basis of the Agreement establishing the Commonwealth of Independent States, and taking into account the reservations made on the occasion of its ratification, documents shall be drawn up regulating cooperation within the framework of the Commonwealth.

The present Protocol forms an integral part of the Agreement establishing the Commonwealth of Independent States.

DONE at Alma Ata on 21 December 1991 in one copy in the Azerbaijani, Armenian, Belarusian, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Moldavian, Russian, Tajik, Turkmen, Uzbek and Ukrainian languages, all texts being equally authentic. The authentic copy shall be deposited in the archives of the Government of the Republic of Belarus, which shall transmit to the High Contracting Parties a certified copy of the present Protocol.

For the Republic of  
Azerbaijan  
A. Mutalibov

For the Republic of  
Armenia  
L. Ter-Petrosyan

For the Republic of  
Belarus  
S. Shushkevich

For the Republic of  
Kazakhstan  
N. Nazarbaev

For the Republic of  
Kyrgyzstan  
A. Akaev

For the Republic of  
Moldova  
M. Snegur

For the Russian  
Federation (RSFSR)  
B. Yeltsin

For the Republic of  
Tajikistan  
R. Nabiev

For Turkmenistan  
S. Niyazov

For the Republic of  
Uzbekistan  
I. Karimov

For Ukraine  
L. Kravchuk

Alma Ata, 21 December 1991

Alma Ata Declaration

The Independent States,

The Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation (RSFSR), the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, the Republic of Uzbekistan and Ukraine,

Desirous of setting up lawfully constituted democratic States, the relations between which will be developed on the basis of mutual recognition of and respect for State sovereignty and sovereign equality, the inalienable right to self-determination, the principles of equality and non-intervention in internal affairs, abstention from the use of force and the threat of force and from economic or any other methods of bringing pressure to bear, peaceful settlement of disputes, respect for human rights and freedoms including the rights of national minorities, conscientious discharge of obligations and the other universally acknowledged principles and norms of international law,

Recognizing and respecting each other's territorial integrity and the inviolability of existing borders,

Considering that the strengthening of the existing deep historical roots of the relations of friendship, good-neighbourliness and mutually advantageous cooperation is in the vital interest of peoples and serves the cause of peace and security,

Aware of their responsibility for maintaining civil order and harmony among the nationalities,

Faithful to the purposes and principles of the Agreement on the establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent States,

Declare that:

Cooperation between the parties in the Commonwealth shall be conducted in accordance with the principle of equality through coordinating bodies constituted on a basis of parity and operating under a procedure to be determined by agreements between the parties in the Commonwealth, which is neither a State nor a supra-State entity.

For purposes of ensuring international strategic stability and security, unified command of strategic military forces and joint control over nuclear weapons will be maintained; the parties will respect each other's efforts to achieve the status of a nuclear-free and/or neutral State.

The Commonwealth of Independent States is open, with the consent of all its participants, to accession by other States members of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and also by other States sharing the purposes and principles of the Commonwealth.

The attachment to cooperation in the establishment and development of a common European space and Europe-wide and Eurasian markets is confirmed.

With the establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics ceases to exist.

The States participating in the Commonwealth guarantee in accordance with their constitutional procedures the discharge of the international obligations deriving from treaties and agreements concluded by the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

The States participating in the Commonwealth undertake to comply strictly with the principles of the present Declaration.

For the Republic of  
Azerbaijan  
A. Mutalibov

For the Republic of  
Armenia  
L. Ter-Petrosyan

For the Republic of  
Belarus  
S. Shushkevich

For the Republic of  
Kazakhstan  
N. Nazarbaev

For the Republic of  
Kyrgyzstan  
A. Akaev

For the Republic of  
Moldova  
M. Snegur

For the Russian  
Federation (RSFSR)  
B. Yeltsin

For the Republic of  
Tajikistan  
R. Nabiev

For Turkmenistan  
S. Niyazov

For the Republic of  
Uzbekistan  
I. Karimov

For Ukraine  
L. Kravchuk

Alma Ata, 21 December 1991

Minutes of the meeting of Heads of Independent States

On the basis of the provision embodied in the Agreement on the establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Alma Ata Declaration relating to the maintenance under unified command of the common strategic military space and to joint control over nuclear weapons, the High Contracting Parties have agreed as follows:

Pending the resolution of the issue of restructuring of the Armed Forces, command of the Armed Forces shall be assigned to Marshal E. I. Shaposhnikov.

Proposals regarding this issue shall be submitted by 30 December 1991 for consideration by the Heads of State.

For the Republic of Azerbaijan A. Mutalibov	For the Republic of Armenia L. Ter-Petrosyan	For the Republic of Belarus S. Shushkevich
For the Republic of Kazakhstan N. Nazarbaev	For the Republic of Kyrgyzstan A. Akaev	For the Republic of Moldova M. Snegur
For the Russian Federation (RSFSR) B. Yeltsin	For the Republic of Tajikistan R. Nabiev	For Turkmenistan S. Niyazov
For the Republic of Uzbekistan I. Karimov	For Ukraine L. Kravchuk	

Alma Ata, 21 December 1991

Agreement on coordinating bodies of the Commonwealth of  
Independent States

1. To deal with the issues associated with coordination of the activity of the States of the Commonwealth in the sphere of common interests, a supreme organ of the Commonwealth, the Council of Heads of State, shall be established, as well as a Council of Heads of Government.

2. The plenipotentiary representatives of the States of the Commonwealth are instructed to submit by 30 December 1991 for consideration by the Council of Heads of State proposals regarding the abolition of the structures of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and also regarding the coordinating bodies of the Commonwealth.

For the Republic of Azerbaijan A. Mutalibov	For the Republic of Armenia L. Ter-Petrosyan	For the Republic of Belarus S. Shushkevich
For the Republic of Kazakhstan N. Nazarbaev	For the Republic of Kyrgyzstan A. Akaev	For the Republic of Moldova M. Snegur
For the Russian Federation (RSFSR) B. Yeltsin	For the Republic of Tajikistan R. Nabiev	For Turkmenistan S. Niyazov
For the Republic of Uzbekistan I. Karimov	For Ukraine L. Kravchuk	

Alma Ata, 21 December 1991

Decision by the Council of Heads of State of the  
Commonwealth of Independent States

The States participating in the Commonwealth, referring to article 12 of the Agreement establishing the Commonwealth of Independent States,

Proceeding from the intention of each State to discharge the obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and to participate in the work of that Organization as full Members,

Bearing in mind that the Republic of Belarus, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Ukraine were founder Members of the United Nations,

Expressing satisfaction that the Republic of Belarus and Ukraine continue to participate in the United Nations as sovereign independent States,

Resolved to promote the strengthening of international peace and security on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations in the interests of their peoples and of the entire international community,

Have decided that:

1. The States of the Commonwealth support Russia's continuance of the membership of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in the United Nations, including permanent membership of the Security Council, and other international organizations.

2. The Republic of Belarus, the RFSFR and Ukraine will extend their support to the other States of the Commonwealth in resolving issues of their full membership in the United Nations and other international organizations.

DONE at Alma Ata on 21 December 1991 in one copy in the Azerbaijani, Armenian, Belarusian, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Moldavian, Russian, Tajik, Turkmen, Uzbek and Ukrainian languages, all texts being equally authentic. The authentic copy shall be deposited in the archives of the Government of the Republic of Belarus, which shall transmit to the High Contracting Parties a certified copy of the present Protocol.

For the Republic of  
Azerbaijan  
A. Mutalibov

For the Republic of  
Kazakhstan  
N. Nazarbaev

For the Russian  
Federation (RSFSR)  
B. Yeltsin

For the Republic of  
Uzbekistan  
I. Karimov

For the Republic of  
Armenia  
L. Ter-Petrosyan

For the Republic of  
Kyrgyzstan  
A. Akaev

For the Republic of  
Tajikistan  
R. Nabiev

For Ukraine  
L. Kravchuk

For the Republic of  
Belarus  
S. Shushkevich

For the Republic of  
Moldova  
M. Snegur

For Turkmenistan  
S. Niyazov

Alma Ata, 21 December 1991

Agreement on joint measures with respect to nuclear weapons

The Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation (RSFSR) and Ukraine, hereinafter referred to as "the participating States",

Confirming their commitment to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons,

Aspiring to the elimination of all nuclear weapons,

Desirous of promoting the strengthening of international stability,

Have agreed as follows:

Article 1

The nuclear weapons with which the Joint Strategic Armed Forces are equipped safeguard the collective security of all participants in the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Article 2

The participating States in the present Agreement confirm the obligation relating to the non-first-use of nuclear weapons.

Article 3

The participating States in the present Agreement shall jointly develop a policy on nuclear issues.

Article 4

Pending the complete elimination of nuclear weapons from the territories of the Republic of Belarus and Ukraine, the decision regarding the need to use such weapons shall be taken with the consent of the Heads of the participating States of the Agreement by the President of the RSFSR on the basis of procedures drawn up jointly by the participating States.

Article 5

1. The Republic of Belarus and Ukraine undertake to accede to the 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as non-nuclear States and to conclude with IAEA the corresponding safeguards agreement.

2. The participating States in the present Agreement undertake not to transfer to any party whatsoever nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices in technology, or control, either direct or indirect, over such weapons and explosive devices, and not in any way to assist, encourage or incite any State not possessing nuclear weapons to produce or acquire by any other means nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or control over such weapons or explosive devices.



3. The provisions of paragraph 2 of this article shall not prevent the transfer of nuclear weapons from the territory of the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan and Ukraine to the territory of the RSFSR for the purpose of their destruction.

Article 6

The participating States of the present Agreement shall in conformity with the international Treaty promote the elimination of nuclear weapons. By 1 July 1992 the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan and Ukraine shall ensure the withdrawal of tactical nuclear weapons to central bases adjacent to the manufacturing plants for dismantling under joint control.

Article 7

The Governments of the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation (RSFSR) and Ukraine undertake to submit the Treaty on the Reduction and Elimination of Strategic Offensive Arms to the Supreme Soviets of their States for ratification.

Article 8

This Agreement is subject to ratification. It shall enter into force 30 days after deposit of all the instruments of ratification with the Government of the RSFSR.

DONE at Alma Ata in one authentic copy in the Belarussian, Kazakh, Russian and Ukrainian languages, all texts being equally authentic.

For the Republic  
of Belarus  
S. Shushkevich

For the Republic  
of Kazakhstan  
N. Nazarbaev

For the Russian  
Federation (RSFSR)  
B. Yeltsin

For Ukraine  
L. Kravchuk

Statement by the delegation of the Republic of Belarus

The delegation of the Republic of Belarus considers that in the process of establishing the Commonwealth of Independent States, all the States must abide strictly by the following principles:

1. Observance of the human rights set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other universally accepted international legal instruments, and observance of the rights of national minorities.

2. Resolution of all disputes exclusively by peaceful means through negotiations.

Accordingly, the delegation of the Republic of Belarus considers that membership in the Commonwealth of Independent States may be maintained only on condition of strict compliance with the above principles.

(Signed) S. Shushkevich  
President of the Supreme Soviet  
of the Republic of Belarus

Adopted unanimously at the high-level meeting of countries participating in the Commonwealth of Independent States at Alma Ata on 21 December 1991 as an official document of the Commonwealth.

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